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In the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. An identifier indicating the status of each claim is provided.

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) An information processing system which includes a server and one or more information processing apparatuses and enables the information processing apparatuses to purchase rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising:

first preparation means, located at the server, for preparing a first usage control status which identifies first usage details describing purchased rights and pricing details corresponding to said first usage details;

storage means for storing, located at the server, said encrypted information, said first usage control status, a usage control policy that contains a second use type that describes rights available for purchase at a subsequent time based on the first usage details of said purchased rights, price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to second usage details, and a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information; and

second preparation means, located at the server, for preparing a second usage control status that identifies said second usage details and pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags, when rights are purchased again by said one or more information processing apparatuses;

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wherein said encrypted information is accessed, at a first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy, and

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, by a second information processing apparatus, using second rights, for a second pre-selected period of time, wherein the second information processing apparatus accesses said encrypted information independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

2. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising first execution means for executing a process to utilize said encrypted information, based on said second usage control status prepared by said second preparation means.

3. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

third preparation means for preparing accounting information that corresponds to said first usage control status and said second usage control status; and

second execution means for executing an account settlement process to settle amounts posted based on said accounting information prepared by said third preparation means.

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4. (Previously Presented) An information processing method for providing rights to encrypted information to one or more information processing apparatuses, comprising the steps of:

preparing a first usage control status, at a server location, which identifies first usage details describing purchased rights and pricing details corresponding to said first usage details, for use by a first information processing apparatus;

storing said encrypted information, at the server location, said first usage control status, a usage control policy that contains a second use type that describes rights that can be purchased again based on said purchased rights, price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to second usage details, and a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information;

preparing a second usage control status, at the server location, that identifies said second usage details and said pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags, when rights are purchased again through a second information processing apparatus; and

a first access step of accessing said encrypted information, for a first pre-selected period of time, at the first information processing apparatus, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

a second access step of subsequently accessing said encrypted information, for a second pre-selected period of time, at the second information processing apparatus, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

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5. (Previously Presented) A providing medium, which provides a computer-readable program for executing a process at a server apparatus which is connected to one or more other information processing apparatus, which purchases rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

a first preparation step, at the server apparatus, of preparing a first usage control status which identifies first usage details describing purchased rights and pricing details corresponding to said first usage details;

a storage step of storing, at the server, said encrypted information, said first usage control status, a usage control policy that, contains a second use type that describes rights that can be purchased again based on details of said purchased rights, price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, and a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information;

a second preparation step of preparing, at the server, a second usage control status that identifies said second usage details and said pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags, when rights are purchased again through said one or more other information processing apparatuses;

a first access step of accessing, at a first information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

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a second access step of subsequently accessing, at a second information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

6. (Previously Presented) A first information processing apparatus, which is connected to one or more second information processing apparatuses and which purchases rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising:

receiving means for receiving, at a first information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information, and usage control status which identifies first usage details describing first purchase rights as well as first pricing details corresponding to said first usage details,

wherein said receiving means receives second usage details describing second purchase rights and second pricing details corresponding to said second usage details;

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy, by the first information processing apparatus and

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, for a second pre-selected period of time, at one of more second information processing apparatus, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

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7. (Previously Presented) An information processing method for a first information processing apparatus which is connected to one or more second information processing apparatuses and which purchases rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

a receiving step of receiving, at the first information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information, and a usage control status which identifies first usage details describing first purchase rights as well as first pricing details corresponding to said first usage details,

wherein said receiving step receives second usage details describing second purchase rights and second pricing details;

a first access step of accessing, at the first information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

a second access step of subsequently accessing, at one or more second information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, for a second pre-selected period of time.

8. (Previously Presented) A providing medium, which provides a computer-readable program for executing a process to a first information processing apparatus which is connected to one or more second information processing apparatuses and which purchases rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

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a receiving step of receiving, at the first information processing apparatus, said encrypted information, a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information, and usage control status which identifies first usage details describing first purchased rights as well as first pricing details corresponding to said first usage details,

wherein said receiving step receives second usage details describing second purchase rights and second pricing details;

a first access step of accessing said encrypted information, at the first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

a second access step of subsequently accessing said encrypted information, at one or more second information processing apparatus, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

9. (Previously Presented) An information processing system that enables the purchase of rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising:

storage means for storing said encrypted information, at a server location, a usage control policy that contains usage details that describe purchasable rights, price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said usage details, and a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information; and

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preparation means for preparing, at the server location, a usage control status which identifies said usage details and the pricing details corresponding to said usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags stored on said storage means;

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, at a first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy, and

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, at a second information processing apparatus, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

10. (Previously Presented) An information processing method for purchasing rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

a storage step of storing at a server location, said encrypted information, a usage control policy that contains usage details that describe purchasable rights, price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said usage details, and a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information;

a preparation step of preparing, at the server location, a usage control status which identifies said usage details and the pricing details corresponding to said usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags stored during said storage step;

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a first access step of accessing said encrypted information, at a first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

a second access step of subsequently accessing said encrypted information, at a second information processing apparatus, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

11. (Previously Presented) A providing medium, which provides a computer-readable program for executing a process to purchase rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

a storage step of storing, at a server location, said encrypted information, a usage control policy that contains usage details that describe purchasable rights, price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said usage details, and a key needed to decrypt said encrypted information;

a preparation step of preparing, at the server location, a usage control status which identifies said usage details and the pricing details corresponding to said usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags stored during said storage step;

a first access step of accessing said encrypted information, at a first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

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a second access step of subsequently accessing said encrypted information, at a second information processing apparatus, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

12. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus, which includes a server connected to one or more information processing apparatuses and which purchases rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising:

receiving means for receiving, at the server location, said encrypted information, a key adapted to decrypt said encrypted information, and a first usage control status which identifies a first use type describing predetermined rights and pricing details corresponding to said first use type;

storage means for storing, at the server location, a usage control policy that contains second usage details that describe rights that can be purchased again based on said first usage control status and price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said second usage details; and

first preparation means for preparing, at the server location, a second usage control status which identifies said second usage details and pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags stored by said storage means,

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wherein said encrypted information is accessed, for a first pre-selected period of time, at the first information processing apparatus, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy, and

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, for a second pre-selected period of time, at a second information processing apparatus, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

13. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising:

second preparation means for preparing accounting information that corresponds to said second usage control status prepared by said first preparation means; and

execution means for executing an account settlement process to settle amounts posted based on said accounting information prepared by said second preparation means.

14. (Previously Presented) An information processing method for purchasing rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

a receiving step of receiving, at a server location, said encrypted information, a key adapted to decrypt said encrypted information, and a usage control status which identifies a first use type describing predetermined rights and pricing details corresponding to said first use type;

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a storage step of storing a usage control policy, at the server location, that contains second usage details that describe rights that can be purchased again based on said first use type and price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said second usage details;

a first preparation step of preparing, at the server location, a second usage control status which identifies said second usage details and pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags stored during said storage step;

a first access step of accessing said encrypted information, at a first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

a second access step of subsequently accessing said encrypted information, at a second information processing apparatus, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

15. (Previously Presented) A providing medium, which provides a computer-readable program for executing a process to a first information processing apparatus which is connected to one or more second information processing apparatuses and which purchases rights to decrypt and use encrypted information, comprising the steps of:

a receiving step of receiving, at a server location, said encrypted information, a key adapted to decrypt said encrypted information, and a first usage control status which

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identifies a first use type describing predetermined rights and pricing details corresponding to said first use type;

a storage step of storing, at the server location, a usage control policy that contains second usage details that describe rights that can be purchased again based on said first use type, and price tags that contain pricing details corresponding to said second usage details;

a first preparation step of preparing, at the server location, a second usage control status which identifies said second usage details and the pricing details corresponding to said second usage details, based on said usage control policy and said price tags stored during said storage step;

a first access step of accessing said encrypted information, at a first information processing apparatus, for a first pre-selected period of time, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy; and

a second access step of subsequently accessing said encrypted information, at a second information processing apparatus, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to the first information processing apparatus.

16. (Currently Amended) A method, stored on a computer-readable medium and executed by a processor, the method for modifying a price associated with content comprising the steps of:

providing a first price associated with particular content;

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utilizing, at a first occurrence, at least a portion of the particular content at one or more reception locations, for a first pre-selected period of time;

providing a second price associated with the particular content as a function of the utilizing step;

utilizing, at a second occurrence, at least a portion of the particular content at one or more reception locations, the second utilization being for a second pre-selected period of time, and independent of a connection to one or more reception locations; and

generating billing information as a function of the first price and the second price;

and

determining a fee for the particular content based on the billing information.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the second price is less than the first price.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of decrypting the particular content at the one or more reception locations.

19. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for modifying a price associated with content comprising:

means for providing a first price associated with particular content;

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means for utilizing, at a first occurrence, at least a portion of the particular content at one or more reception locations;

means for providing a second price associated with the particular content as a function of the means for utilizing;

means for utilizing, at a second occurrence, at least a portion of the particular content at one or more reception locations;

wherein said encrypted information is accessed for a first pre-selected period of time, at a first reception location, as a function of said purchased rights and usage control policy,

wherein said encrypted information is accessed, at a second reception location, for a second pre-selected period of time, independent of a connection to one or more information processing apparatus; and

means for generating billing information as a function of the first price and the second price.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the second price is less than the first price.

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising means for decrypting the particular content at the one or more reception locations.